

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D. C.

ORDER NO. 812

IN THE MATTER OF:

Served May 2, 1968

Investigation of Rates for)
Interstate Taxicab Trans-)
portation.)

Application No. 472

Docket No. 170

APPEARANCES:

RUSSELL H. HORNBACK, appearing for Union Taxi Owners
Cooperative Association, Inc.

FREDERICK H. EVANS, appearing for Capitol Cab Corpora-
tion, Inc.

JERRY K. EMRICH, appearing for Arlington County Board

IRVING SCHLAIFER, appearing as Chairman, Owner-Driver
Rental-Driver Taxicab Association

CHARLES JAY PILZER, appearing for Diamond Cab and
Yellow Cab Company of D. C., Inc.

DAVID E. FELDMAN, Assistant County Attorney, appearing
for Public Utilities Commission of Fairfax County,
Virginia

RUSSELL W. CUNNINGHAM, General Counsel, Washington
Metropolitan Area Transit Commission

This Commission has been given "the duty and the power to prescribe reasonable rates for transportation by taxicabs" between the signatories to the Compact. Article XII, Section 8. Accordingly, one of the first acts of this agency was the prescription of interstate rates to be charged by all taxicabs in the Metropolitan District. Order No. 67, issued

October 9, 1961. For reasons stated therein, a specific rate structure for taxis domiciled in the District of Columbia was prescribed; the rates to be charged by taxis domiciled in the cities and counties of the suburban area were prescribed to be those rates authorized by the local jurisdictions for internal service. At that time, the general level of rates in all jurisdictions equated to 50¢ for the first mile and 40¢ for each additional mile; the effect of this was to provide a substantial degree of uniformity in interstate rates.

Gradually, however, various suburban authorities authorized increases in their local rates; under the terms of Order 67, the interstate rate changed concomitantly.

Recently, several District of Columbia-domiciled taxicab associations formally sought an increase in their rate structure for interstate service. The Commission, sua sponte, found that a separate rate structure could not exist for each taxicab within a particular jurisdiction. Accordingly, it elected to investigate the reasonableness of the existing rate structure of the entire taxicab industry domiciled in the District of Columbia.

This matter was heard by the Commission on April 1, 1968. Opposition to the increase for D. C. cabs was made by the Arlington County Board and the Fairfax County Public Utilities Commission. The Chief Engineer of the Commission testified that whatever rates might be found to be reasonable for District of Columbia-domiciled taxicabs, those rates should be on a parity with the rates charged by the suburban taxicabs for a corresponding service. He concluded that the Commission should give consideration to prescribing a uniform rate for all interstate taxicab transportation in the Metropolitan District.

We agree. In the first place, the evidence of any need for an increase in fare for the District of Columbia taxicabs was less than conclusive. In fact, this point was recognized by the industry members themselves at the conclusion of the hearing. The paucity of accurate and detailed economic data was the basis for a motion to dismiss the proceedings by the two county boards.

However, the testimony and exhibits of the Staff's Chief Engineer underscore the disparity now existing in the rates for interstate taxicab transportation. While the grant

of the proposed increase would ameliorate the disparity in some instances, neither the grant nor the denial of it would cure what is looming as a much more significant problem -- the apparent total lack of uniformity of taxi rates in the Metropolitan District.

Accordingly, the Commission is of the opinion that this proceeding should be enlarged to embrace an investigation into the reasonableness of all interstate taxicab rates, whereby the Commission may determine whether a uniform rate is required, and, if so, what that rate should be. As a grant of the motion to dismiss would not resolve the ultimate and primary issues, that motion will be denied.

To facilitate the investigation, the following procedure will be followed. First, the major taxicab companies and members of associations in each local jurisdiction, as identified hereinafter, will be made respondents to this proceeding.

The staff will prepare and serve upon the respondents a form designed to elicit the information required by us upon which a decision may be made. The respondents will supply the data in the manner and time stated in the form; where associations are named as respondents, it shall be the duty of members of the association to furnish their officers or representatives with manifests and other data necessary to complete the staff form.

The staff shall evaluate the data received and shall submit its recommendation as to whether a uniform interstate taxi rate should be prescribed and, if so, recommend such a rate structure. The recommendation will be submitted ten (10) days prior to the hearing hereinafter scheduled. All interested parties may comment upon the staff recommendation and offer recommendations of their own.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED:

1. That Union Taxi Owners Cooperative Association, Inc., and members-drivers thereof; Capitol Cab Corporation, Inc., and members-drivers thereof; Yellow Cab of D. C. and members-drivers thereof; Diamond Cab of D. C. and members-drivers thereof; Red Top Cab of Arlington, Virginia; Fairfax Yellow Cab of Fairfax, Virginia; Yellow Cab of Falls Church, Virginia;

Yellow Cab of Alexandria, Virginia; Barwood Cab of Montgomery County, Maryland; Yellow Cab of Silver Spring, Maryland; Blue Bird Cab of Hyattsville, Maryland; and Airport Transport, Inc., be, and they are hereby, made or retained as respondents to this proceeding.

2. That the Staff of the Commission conduct and carry out the tasks described above.

3. That this matter be, and it is hereby, set for hearing on Wednesday, June 19, 1968, at 10:00 A.M., in the Hearing Room of the Commission, 1815 North Fort Myer Drive, Arlington, Virginia.


4. That the respondents furnish the economic and accounting data in the time and manner prescribed by the Executive Director pursuant to this order.

5. That the motion of the Arlington County Board and the Fairfax County Public Utilities Commission to dismiss or deny the proposed increase in rates of the District of Columbia-domiciled taxicabs be, and it is hereby, denied.

6. That any person having an interest in this matter who desires to become a formal party shall notify the Commission, in conformity with its Rules, on or before Monday, June 10, 1968.

7. That the Chief Clerk cause notice of this order to be published in newspapers of general circulation in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, Maryland; Washington, D. C.; Arlington and Fairfax Counties, Virginia.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMISSION:



MELVIN E. LEWIS
Executive Director